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LETTER DATED 13 APRIL 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In view of the Security Council's deliberations, I have the honour to inform you of the Belgian Government's views on the worsening of the situation in Rwanda and the implications for the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). I should be grateful if you would bring these views to the attention of the members of the Council.

As you know, the widespread massacres following the death of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi have been compounded by a military conflict between the forces of the Rwandese Patriotic Front and those loyal to the Rwandese Government. In the light of that situation, the Belgian and French Governments were obliged to organize a brief humanitarian operation to evacuate foreign nationals, including the staff of foreign embassies and United Nations personnel. The evacuation operation is now being wound up under extremely difficult and dangerous conditions. The Rwandese Government's departure from the capital has confirmed the rapid deterioration of the situation.

The chaos in Rwanda has assumed such proportions that the implementation of the Arusha agreements seems very seriously jeopardized, at least in the foreseeable future. Such implementation was the very reason for the UNAMIR operation. The lack of progress had recently led the Security Council to renew the mandate of UNAMIR only for a four-month period, on the understanding that the Secretary-General would prepare an evaluation report within six weeks.

It is obvious that under these conditions the continuation of the UNAMIR operation has become pointless within the terms of its present mandate. In any event, the continued presence of the Belgian contingent would expose it to unacceptable risks and would constitute an obstacle to UNAMIR action as a whole. Indeed, Belgium notes that an extremist political faction is waging an anti-Belgian campaign and inciting people to murder Belgian soldiers. Having already suffered the loss of 10 soldiers, the Belgian contingent cannot take such threats lightly.

In conclusion, the Belgian Government is of the opinion that it is imperative to suspend the activities of UNAMIR forces without delay, until such time as the conditions are met for the resumption of the peace process. It considers that in the coming weeks or months, a United Nations presence in Rwanda can be justified only on humanitarian grounds.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Paul NOTERDAEME
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations.